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RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0888
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1316
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 3687
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1085
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 1724
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC//DHO-7//
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1473
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000772

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2011
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: A CHASTENED MUTAMBARA SEEKS ASSISTANCE AND TOUTS
COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC UNITY

REF: (A) HARARE 769 (B) HARARE 698

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher W. Dell under Section 1.4 b/d

Summary

[¶1.](#) (C) MDC pro-Senate faction President Arthur Mutambara on June 27 sought the Ambassador's assistance and advice in connection with a planned U.S. visit. The Ambassador responded that we would support the visit and added that we would provide equitable assistance to Mutambara,s faction in the same manner we supported other elements of the democratic opposition. The Ambassador suggested that while in the U.S. Mutambara concentrate his fire on the Mugabe regime rather than attacking the other faction of the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai. Mutambara agreed and said his message would

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revolve around the need for unity of purpose (and even a potential coalition) among democratic forces, including with the other MDC faction. Mutambara and the faction,s Deputy Secretary-General, Priscilla Misihairabwa-Mushonga, agreed

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with the Ambassador that the regime was increasingly desperate as the country,s economic decline worsened and the succession struggle within ZANU-PF sharpened. Mutambara argued that the opposition couldn't afford to be just observers to ZANU-PF,s implosion but needed to forge a unified front and seize the agenda. End Summary.

U.S. Visit and Assistance Request

¶2. (C) Mutambara told the Ambassador that he and faction MP David Coltart had been invited to visit the Aspen Institute July 3-9. He said they planned to take advantage of the invitation to subsequently conduct business in the United States, including meeting with U.S. Government officials and with the Zimbabwean diaspora. To that end he and Coltart would be in Washington D.C. July 10-12. Mutambara said he would then stay on in the U.S. alone to visit the diaspora communities in Dallas, Atlanta and Chicago.

¶3. (C) Mutambara asked for the Ambassador,s help in arranging meetings in Washington and also renewed his earlier request for USG financial assistance to allow two to three additional faction officials to accompany him to the U.S. (ref B). The Ambassador responded that the State Department was already working on meetings with appropriate executive branch officials and was coordinating with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and International Republican Institute (IRI) on other meetings. With regard to travel, we would provide equitable assistance to Mutambara,s faction as we did other parts of Zimbabwe,s democratic opposition. However, resources were limited and funding travel to the U.S. was expensive. We would nonetheless endeavor to find funds to allow at least one additional official to participate in the visit.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador added that we were also considering the faction,s other assistance requests. We were prepared to include the faction in training programs, including for the faction,s fledgling information department. Misihairabwa-Mushonga said their other top priority in that regard was training in voter education. The Ambassador said that should also be possible. However, he noted that the faction,s request for assistance with equipment was more

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problematic. The faction needed to first account for all USG-provided material in its possession. Mutambara agreed to inventory the faction's possessions for any USG-provided property and report back.

Faction "Messaging"

¶5. (C) In response to Mutambara's request for counsel on what his message should be in Washington, the Ambassador urged the faction to present a positive, forward-looking message, explaining its objectives and how it intended to achieve them. He also stressed that Washington interlocutors would be most interested in how the faction intended to challenge Mugabe and the regime, the root of Zimbabwe's problems. Washington was well aware of the MDC's factional strife and was concerned that it had damaged the party,s ability to effectively oppose the Mugabe regime. Mutambara would be best served by avoiding criticism of Morgan Tsvangirai and instead focusing on a positive message that

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change was possible and that the democratic opposition was working together to bring it about.

¶6. (C) Mutambara asserted that a successful long-term effort would require unity of purpose across the range of opposition elements. Projecting a strong unified front and the ability to govern was imperative, and he was prepared to work with the other faction, perhaps in a coalition, "to defeat the monster." This was the message that he would take to Washington and the U.S. Mutambara added that he had been touring the country widely, working on party structures, and consulting more closely with civil society. In the longer run, forging and publicly projecting unified strength of political actors and civil society were the keys to pressing the regime into needed change. In that vein, he suggested

that rumored consultations between his "brothers" in the anti-senate faction and ZANU-PF's Mujuru faction, if true, were premature and would be counterproductive. (N.B. The same rumors are rife with respect to Mutambara and his faction and in our view are equally possible.)

On Regime Desperation

¶17. (C) Asked by the Ambassador for his views on the regime's situation, Mutambara emphasized that the regime recognized its fragility and that its latest outreach efforts, to the churches and to some in the diplomatic community, were born out of sheer desperation. The GOZ's recent investment in a clumsily engineered National Day of Prayer was evidence of its perceived need to enlist credible allies. He noted that he had declined a last minute invitation to attend and that Daniel Shumba of the recently launched United People's Party was the only nominal opposition player to participate. He also asserted that the Prayer Day ploy was undermined by Mugabe's attack on Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube, which exposed its political motive.

¶18. (C) Responding to the Ambassador's inquiry whether ZANU-PF had any surprises up its sleeve, Mushonga suggested a superficially dramatic economic measure, perhaps another devaluation or privatization push, could soon be announced. However, the utility of such a development was open to question given Mugabe's refusal to chart any meaningful policy changes. The Mujuru camp - the "hardliners" in her

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view - saw Mugabe's departure as the key to international assistance and were growing impatient. She claimed that another group had coalesced around RBZ Governor Gono, which was to countenance Mugabe's continuation as long as he yielded policy to them and allow them to pursue needed reforms.

¶19. (C) The Ambassador responded that either of those two outcomes would be painful for Mugabe since they implied significant change and reform. Either he would be forced from office or he would remain as a figurehead, having ceded real power to reformers. Moreover, Gono and the Mujurus had recently been rumored to be allies. The shifting alliances within ZANU-PF that Mushonga had described seemed to us further evidence of a party in disarray whose leaders were increasingly motivated by a toxic mixture of greed, fear and ambition. Mutambara agreed and concluded by emphasizing that the opposition couldn't afford to be observers to this game but needed to forge a unified front and seize the agenda.

Comment

¶10. (C) Mutambara and his faction have cooled public criticism of their "brothers" in the other faction and quietly appear to be turning their attention to longer term issues. More pragmatic and less antagonistic toward the anti-senate faction than Mushonga and others in his faction's leadership, and perhaps humbled by his faction's dismal performance over the past few months, Mutambara may yet contribute to a stronger and more unified opposition given time. Nonetheless, as suggested in ref A, he is an unproven and struggling figure who so far has failed to build a significant following and we urge that the Department receive Mutambara at a level lower than Tsvangirai.

¶11. (C) Mushonga's characterization of Mujuru-Gono tension as central within the ruling party is at odds with most others' assessment, including our own. The central fight is still between the Mujurus and Emmerson Mnangagwa. It also fails to account for the true &hardliners,8 individuals like State Security Minister Didymus Mutasa, who oppose any

reform or concession. That said, we don,t rule out that there are growing cleavages even among ZANU-PF,s relative moderates. These days, it appears it's everyone for him/herself within ZANU-PF) and it couldn,t happen to a nicer, or more deserving bunch.
DELL